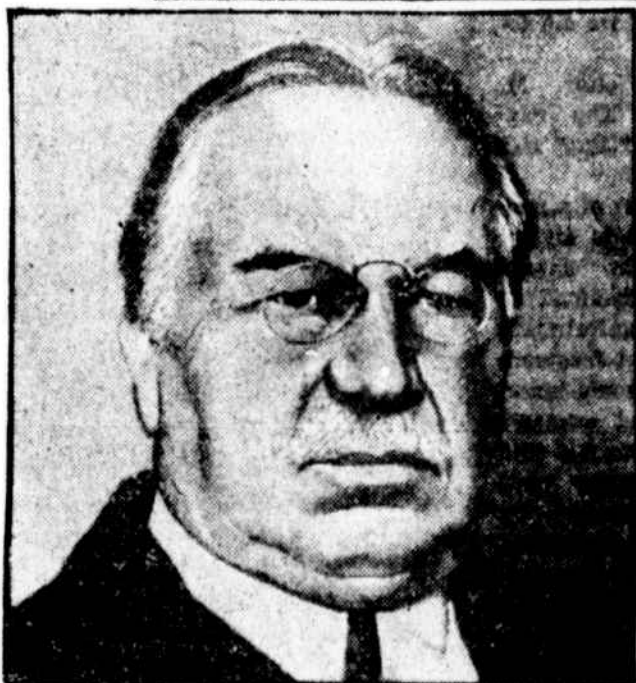


Was Pres. Shonts (The New York Traction Magnate) "Vamped"

How "My Friend Amanda Thomas," Chorus Girl, Married, Twice Divorced, Won the Old Man's Affection and Turns Up With a "Will" That Gives Her His Estate



Photograph of Amanda Thomas taken about twenty years ago, when she was a chorus girl under the name of "Jeanne Caskie."



Photograph of Theodore P. Shonts, showing how he had aged, become flabby and was broken physically and mentally during the last few years with Mrs. Thomas, after he had abandoned his own wife and children.

CHAPTER XVIII.

(Continued from Last Sunday)

THE penniless widow of Theodore P. Shonts makes affidavit and swears that she has reason to believe that Amanda C. Thomas

"Wife" wickedly and maliciously engaged in gaining the affections of Theodore P. Shonts and persuaded him to go with her, and did prey ruthlessly upon him, and by her artifices, immoralities and wiles enticed Theodore P. Shonts from the society of his wife and alienated his love and affection from her."

The Shonts' millions have vanished—has Mrs. Thomas got them?

Shonts' happy home was broken up soon after Mrs. Thomas met him—did Amanda deliberately ensnare the old millionaire?

Mrs. Shonts, the widow, swears that the Thomas woman wilfully entrapped her husband and "did prey ruthlessly upon him."

The dictionary characterizes as a "vampire" one who preys ruthlessly upon others, thus:

VAMPIRE—A person of malignant and loathsome character, especially one who preys ruthlessly upon others.

Did Amanda Thomas "Vamp" the traction president, as his widow asserts?

The Vampire of the drama and the motion picture is well known—she is an adventuress, who usually begins as a chorus girl, uses her stage opportunity to lure some victim into her net, soon leaves the footlights and lives in the whirl of luxury and gayety, marries and cloaks her activities with a camouflage of respectability, ruins her husband if he has a fortune, gets a divorce and often marries again and again as opportunity and convenience offer, but clings to some married name as a badge of decency, and now, though she toils not, neither has she a husband, yet she lives in luxury and wears fine furs and many jewels—and some man of millions, fascinated by the Vampire, leaves a sorrowing wife and children to follow the silken skirt of this woman until he has been stripped of his fortune, his good name and the affection of those who were dear to him.

That is the Vampire the public knows on the screen. Will the testimony Mrs. Shonts' lawyers promise to present in court prove the truth of the stinging words of their damage suit and reveal Amanda Thomas as a Vampire in real life which will match or perhaps outrival the Vampires of the movies?

The evidence which Mrs. Shonts' attorneys, Judge Dixon and Mr. George W. Files, have collected they refuse to reveal until it is presented in court at the trial. But a rather interesting list of facts in the Thomas woman's career is already known. Briefly catalogued it would appear that the woman accused by Mrs. Shonts of being a "Vamp" first turned up in New York twenty-two years ago, looking for a job, and was given a place as a chorus girl. The chronology of events in her progress from chorus to millions would seem to be somewhat as follows:

1898—Amanda Caskie arrives in New York from Virginia and goes to work as a chorus girl, salary \$20 a week.

1899—As "Jeanne Caskie" she appeared in the chorus of several road shows, and, being red-headed, was known as "Red Top." She married a clerk in a theatrical booking office named Walter Yeager, a thief.

1900—Playing in the chorus of the musical comedy "Mam-selle 'Awkins," "Red Top" met a 19-year-old high

school boy, Herbert F. Thomas, the son of a millionaire New York banker. The boy abandoned his school, travelled from town to town with the show and showered money and attentions on the chorus girl.

1901—The Thomas boy, now thoroughly infatuated, promised to marry "Red Top," who got a divorce from Walter Yeager, the thief, and the chorus girl became Mrs. Herbert F. Thomas. Before this and while still the wife of the \$30-a-week clerk she was known as the best dressed chorus girl on the stage.

1902—Young Thomas and his chorus girl bride lived in great style at the Hotel Waldorf in New York.

1903—The pair still spent money lavishly, went to Europe, but Amanda began to run up bills that she failed to pay.

1904—Young Thomas had run through a considerable fortune, getting into debt through extravagance, and the pair began to have disputes and serious matrimonial squalls. More unpaid bills.

1905—Thomas and Amanda separated. Thomas stopped paying his wife's bills—but she got along all right, just the same. In September Amanda Thomas (separated from her husband) and, with no visible source of income, sailed for Europe on the same ship as Mrs. Shonts and her two daughters. In October they met again in a shop in Paris, and Amanda remarked, the Shonts girls say, that she had bought two hundred gowns and dozens of underwear. Who paid for that trip to Europe and that outfit?

1906—Coming back to America on the same ship, the "Amerika," were Mrs. Shonts and her two daughters—and Amanda, with trunks loaded with clothes. President Shonts met the ship on its arrival in New York, and was introduced to Amanda by his daughter Marguerite on October 20.

1907—Mrs. Shonts swears Amanda and Shonts at this time began their relations, and that he was paying her bills. Amanda says her life with Shonts had not really begun in 1907. Who was paying her bills?—Not her husband, certainly, because he had lost his last dollar in the Wall Street panic of 1907.

1908—Amanda managed to live very comfortably at the Waldorf, the Hotel Aberdeen, etc., and, Mrs. Shonts asserts and Amanda denies, that Shonts was paying her expenses. Again arises the mystery of where she got the money to live on.

1909—Mrs. Thomas then appeared as the mistress of a four-story and basement house, No. 44 East Thirty-fifth street, with an outfit of eight or ten servants. The mystery of how Amanda managed it grows deeper—unless Mrs. Shonts is correct in her explanation that the Shonts fortune was being poured out on Amanda. Shonts and the Thomas woman had a cottage on Long Island that Summer, Mrs. Shonts asserts.

1910—The City Directory still gives Mrs. Thomas's address at the East Thirty-fifth street house. If Shonts and Amanda had any cozy Summer plans they were upset by the lingering and fatal illness of Mr. Shonts' father, which tied Shonts and Mrs. Shonts to the sick man's bedside in Chicago until late in the year.

1911—Amanda still maintained the East Thirty-fifth street establishment, with cook, maid, nurse, companion, cleaning woman, laundress and two or three sewing women. Shonts and Amanda occupied a cottage for the Summer at Cascades, Vermont, a big, luxurious estate—while Mrs. Shonts and the daughters were crowded into two rooms in a boarding house at Atlantic City.

1912—In July Shonts and Amanda sailed for Europe. She still managed to find the money to pay the rent, wages and food bills at the house in East Thirty-fifth street.

1913—Still living at the same town address in the early part of the year. Shonts and Amanda made a Summer trip abroad, and on their return in September they both moved into the apartment-house on West End avenue and Eighty-third street.

1914—On June 15 Shonts and the Thomas woman sailed for Europe—This was three days after Amanda had had her divorce hearing before a referee. All those years that she and Shonts were in New York together and touring Europe she was still the wife of Herbert Thomas. In October, 1914, Amanda got her final decree, WITH \$3 A WEEK ALIMONY FROM HERBERT THOMAS!

1915—Living at the West End avenue apartment house in the Winter, Amanda and Shonts spent the Summer together at a cottage in Red Bank, N. J. At this cottage Shonts' mother died.

1916—During the Summer Shonts and Mrs. Thomas made a tour across the continent in a private car, visiting

ON September twenty-first last Theodore P. Shonts, president of the great traction lines of New York City, died—virtually died in the arms of Amanda C. Thomas. Mrs. Shonts, the wife, sat anxiously and alone in her apartment several blocks away, FORBIDDEN TO SEE HER DYING HUSBAND.

"To my friend Amanda Thomas," Mr. Shonts in his last will bequeathed the bulk of his estate.

The courts have been asked to inquire into this interesting woman, who devoted many years of her life to Shonts, though both were married, and who turns up at his death with a queer "will" made in her favor.

The Shonts millions have disappeared. What has become of the old traction magnate's fortune?

"Amanda C. Thomas did prey ruthlessly upon the said Theodore P. Shonts, and by her artifices, immoralities and wiles enticed him to desert her

and wilfully and maliciously del

These are the words of the begun against Amanda Thomas brought to make her disgorge the Thomas wheedled out of Mr. Sho

Who is this Amanda Thomas recently have been told some of courts are beginning to examine love triangle. Before long the Straton so forcibly put in a rece

"If the wronged wife is fin money, will not the tendency be the question, 'If she did these th why may not I?'"

California and travelling up and down the Pacific coast. In the Fall the pair were told to vacate their apartments in the West End avenue house.

1917—Shonts and Mrs. Thomas moved to No. 930 Park avenue, and in the Summer made a trip West to the Canadian Rockies, stopping at Banff Springs, Alberta. On this trip the Yeoman servant and the boy Herbert Thomas, Jr., went along.

1918—Shonts and Amanda were at No. 930 Park avenue Spring and Fall, and lived at a cottage Shonts rented at Long Beach, Long Island, during the Summer.

1919—Shonts spent the Winter at the Park avenue apartment and was not well. As Summer came on he grew more feeble, and on September 21 he died—just what his sickness was and the mystery of what went on while Amanda had him guarded from the approach of his wife and daughters, Mrs. Shonts' lawyers are trying to find out.

Shonts met Amanda Thomas on that incoming steamship's deck that fateful day in 1906—Shonts was then a multi-millionaire.

Shonts died last September, thirteen years later—and the Shonts millions had disappeared, and the Thomas woman emerged from the mystery of the dead man's apartment with a suspicious "last will" made in her favor and a bill of sale giving "my friend Amanda" all Shonts' personal property.

And in the fog and mystery of the pretended "last will" of Shonts there is much which Mrs. Shonts' lawyers would like cleared up. In one of the documents on file in this connection are the following strange assertions about Shonts' millions which Mrs. Shonts has been informed have been hidden away from her:

"That this deponent (Mrs. Shonts) in this proceeding is objecting to the probate of an alleged will of Theodore P. Shonts, her late husband, dated July 30, 1919, wherein Delancey Nicoll, the Guaranty Trust Company of New York and one E. J. Berwind are named as executors.

"That the said E. J. Berwind is a large stockholder and one of the directors of the said Guaranty Trust Company and wields a large influence in the policy of said corporation.

"That the said E. J. Berwind is a friend of one Amanda Thomas, the residuary legatee named in that alleged will.

"Deponent (Mrs. Shonts) is not ignorant of and unfamiliar with the condition of said estate of her said deceased husband, but, on the contrary, has considerable information respecting the same, concerning the possession of which information the said Guaranty Trust Company, Delancey Nicoll and E. J. Berwind may not be acquainted.

"After said Guaranty Trust Company undertook the temporary administration of said estate deponent (Mrs. Shonts), through her attorneys, requested a statement as to the assets of said estate which had come into its hands, and in response thereto received reply stating the approximate value of the net estate to be about \$514,000, with a list of the securities comprising same, and a gross estate of about \$771,000.

"Deponent (Mrs. Shonts) has in her possession a written statement by her husband, in his own handwriting, as far back as 1905, with a list of his securities, wherein it appears that he was then worth over two million of dollars, not inclusive of any real estate.

"On information and belief that during the years 1914 to 1919 the said Theodore P. Shonts held and owned, through various individuals, large blocks of the Interborough Rapid Transit Company stocks, although the schedule of assets furnished to deponent by the Guaranty Trust Company, as temporary administrator, shows a comparatively small amount of said stocks found among his assets, to wit, 400 Interborough Rapid Transit stocks of the total valuation of \$13,400, as of December, 1919.

"Deponent further says that she has been informed in such way that she believes it to be true that the said Theodore P. Shonts at the time of his death was worth at least \$4,000,000.

"Deponent (Mrs. Shonts) has been informed, in such way that she believes it to be true, that her late husband about the year 1914 conceived the idea that on account of world politics and conditions a man of wealth should endeavor to make some provision so that the public could not know what he might be worth, and for the purpose of concealing his wealth he delivered certain of it to confidential friends and advisers, and among such friends and advisers to the said Delancey Nicoll and to E. J. Berwind. That from 1914 to 1919 he delivered to said Delancey